



From October 2017 (Volume 80—Capri photos)





October 2017

We had a really great time in Capri. Booked via Mike at Scott's Travel and the hotel etc looked good on line but we were more than delighted with the reality. Flying from Stansted to Naples we plumped for the early flight forgetting the required two hour check in plus minicab there so we got up at 3.30am and were gobsmacked to find Stansted totally heaving even at that early hour. A one day bus strike in Naples meant we had to cab it through the insane traffic to the ferry port and we arrived via a quiet ferry at the sunny bustling marina of Capri. As we were not sure where Anacapri was, and where the hotel itself was situated, we took one of the great open-sided taxis up the winding narrow roads to The Capri Palace Hotel at the top. We arrived and opened our eyes (the ride was manic, really narrow winding cliff-edge roads—a driver who insisted on pointing out the Marina below and Ischia across the water—this was in between his casual mobile phone calls).

The walk through beautiful gardens with views through side widows under the pool led to a beautiful reception area, more like a gallery than a hotel. There were wonderful art works everywhere and the décor was really tasteful. Our greeting was so warm and the receptionist (who also upgraded us) took us on a hotel tour. It left us speechless as everywhere was so attractive and all the staff greeted us as we were shown around. Our room was very tastefully furnished and the balcony views overlooked the gardens with the sea below and Vesuvius and Ischia in the distance. A knock on the door and a platter of fresh chilled fruit arrived....yes the hotel was a great choice and everything we did and saw there was faultless. Really, a first, where every aspect gelled and we were very sad to leave.

Capri, being an island, imports most of its goods and was expensive compared to mainland Italy but it appears that the season ends two weeks after we left (end of October) and the lovely weather changes for a really dramatic rainy and windy climate and everything closes and the staff have a regular annual pilgrimage to Zermatt in Switzerland for the winter skiing season where I am sure they are welcomed with open arms. Therefore locals have to capitalise on the limited tourist season.

We made good use of the local bus and enjoyed the great walks with fabulous views at every turn. It is really a marvellous place to stay. We had heard that many tourists come from Naples, Amalfi coast and Sorrento by ferry or jetfoil for day trips during the season and Capri has a totally different feel after around 6.00pm when the island empties out. Even this time of year we found that to be very evident with large parties trailing behind flags held high by the multi-lingual leaders. As most of the day trippers were watching the clock they did not venture into the delightful small pedestrian lanes leading around the island with wonderful villas and tropical gardens at every turn.

We got maps and covered quite a lot of the less well-known trails and were rewarded with some fascinating villas, views and hidden delights. Most of the small villas have delightful ceramic name plates with relevant painting glazed onto them and I enjoyed photographing them (as you will see)

We had booked a late flight back from Naples and on our last day we were taken by hotel shuttle service to the Jetfoil marina (not requested and not charged). From there we arrived in Naples and took a taxi to the Napoli Central station where we put our (small) cases in the left luggage area. We then went downstairs and got the Circumvesuviana, to go to Pompei Scavi. I had not seen Pompeii since I was a kid with Mum and Dad and Lynn had not seen it at all.

The train was old and packed and covered in graffiti and we were entertained by buskers in the carriage. The guy seated next to me insisted on taking my camera and taking shots as we approached Vesuvius. It was a great atmosphere. After a bracing double espresso we entered Pompeii which was not as crowded as I had feared.

I remember that Pompeii was large but it's size still amazed us and the museum's explanation of the history and tragedy that had happened helped us to enjoy the whole experience. We were fascinated with the history of the whole city and found many areas where frescos and murals and tiled floors had been uncovered and were in a remarkable good condition and confirmed how civilised the inhabitants had been. It was very hot so eventually we returned to Naples by train. Unfortunately Naples (or at least, the part we saw) is not pleasant so we had a station snack and took a shuttle bus to the airport. The flight was a little over 2 hours and our minicab this end was on time. It had been a long day

Our lovely kids kept in touch by email and Whatsapp and it is so nice to enjoy ourselves but keep in contact with the family Loads of photos ("what a surprise" I hear you say) follow.....but once again our destination was a photographers paradise



Some of the great places we went to on Capri

Capri town centre

La Ricco Country Club

Anacapri

Blue Grotto

Villa San Michele

Winding road
from Marina to
hotel

Marina (from Napoli)

Villa Lysis

Villa Jovis

Chair lift

Capri Palace Hotel

Arco Naturale



Waiting for the
ferry in Naples
harbour

Capris harbour
from the taxi up
to Anacapri

Those great open -sided taxis

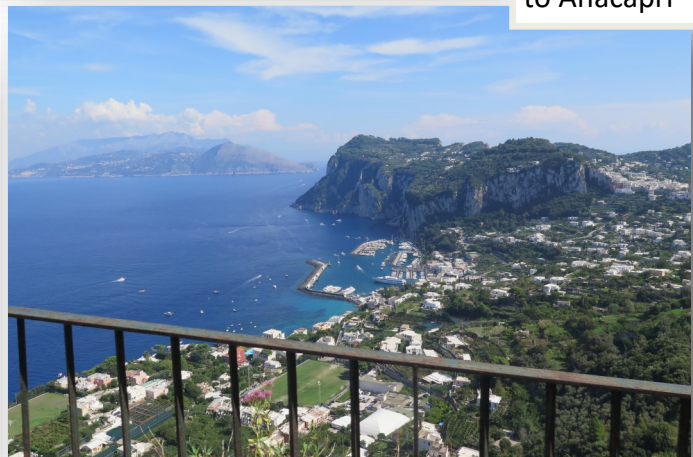




Photo History



Around the hotel

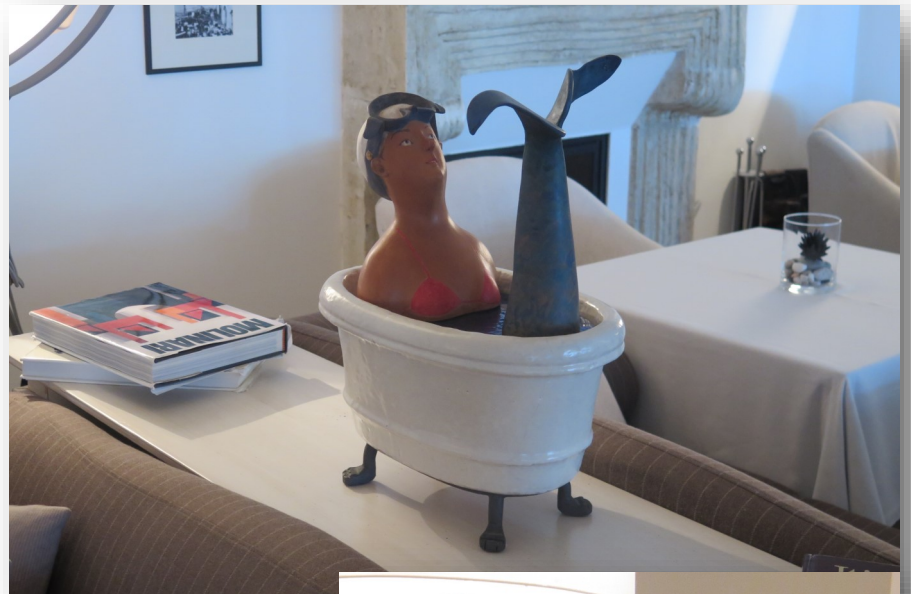






Some of the stunning art pieces around the hotel





More hotel art





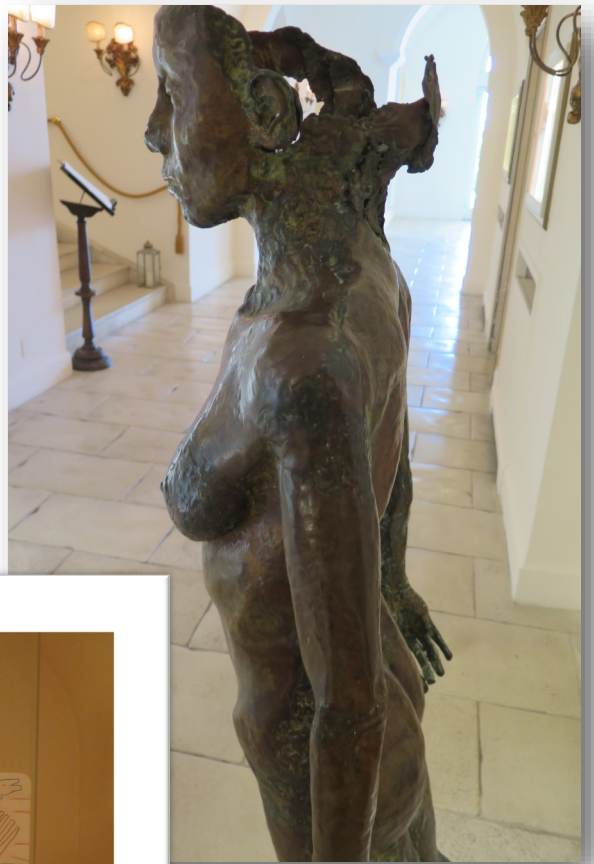
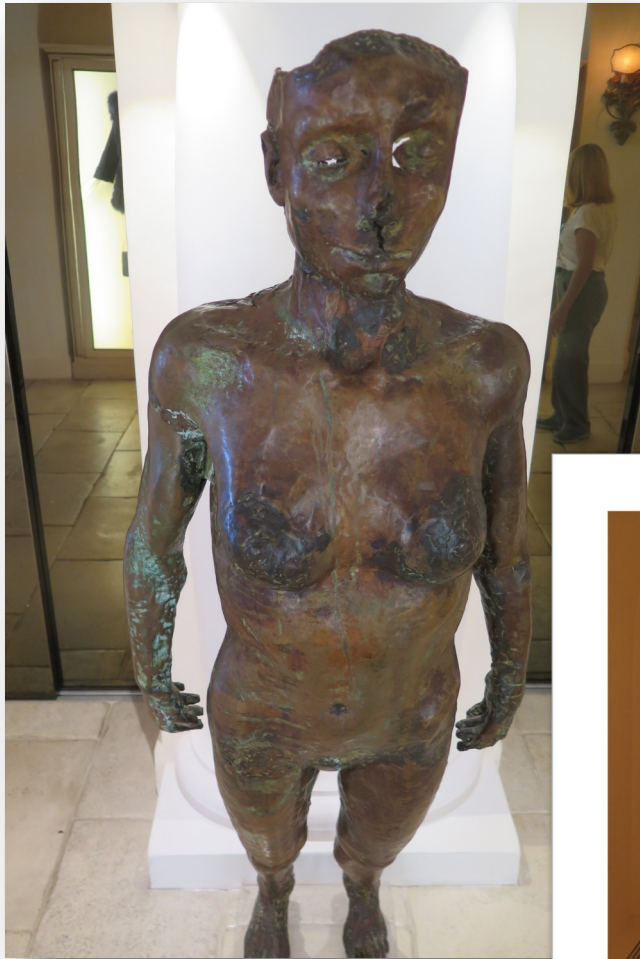




Photo History



Every night numerous candles
were lit inside and outside





Piazza Umberco
in Capri Centre

We took the small bus down from Anacapri to the bustling centre of Capri but once we were on the winding narrow paths we left people behind and the villas and views were wonderful

Arco Naturale on the eastern side of the island





Most of the villas were hidden away behind tall walls with great views and they all had beautiful individual house name plates mostly with a design based on the name of the villa or location. I took lots of photos of these as they were a unique island feature











Photo History



We had heard about Villa Lysis and we walked from the centre of Capri along narrow lanes to the coast where the villa stands high above the sea in a wonderful position. Count Fersen, a descendent of a wealthy Swedish family had been convicted of corruption of minors in France in 1903 and as homosexuality was not understood then he moved here in 1904 deciding to build this majestic residence on the highest part of Capri. His opium addiction (with the opium den as a villa feature) eventually contributed to his suicide in 1923. Since 2015 The Town of Capri has owned Villa Lysis but much of the furniture and contents had already been stolen and the rest sold. We found the air of silence, history and obvious previous grandeur added to its fascination . The gardens were tidy but obviously only a shadow of their former glory but nothing could detract from the breath-taking views and delight of the position

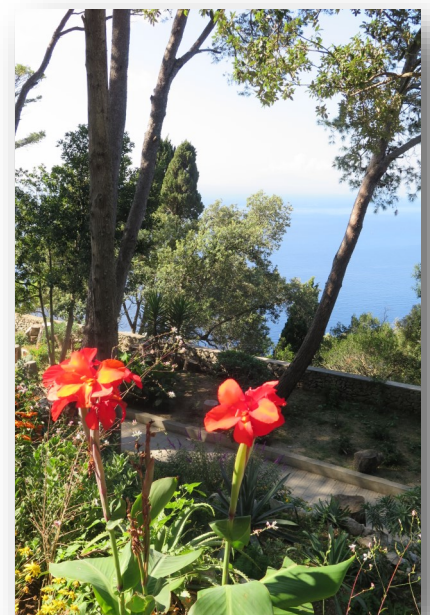




Photo History



HALL

"I crossed the Bay of Naples as you cross the Lethe, the purifying river. I left behind me the old Europe, embellished with lies. Capri was the island of oblivion".
(R. Peyrefitte, The Exile of Capri)

Jacques d'Adelswärd Fersen was born in Paris in 1880, descendant of the noble families Adelswärd, of Swedish origin, and Fersen, of French origin. The family enriched thanks to the steel mills built in Longwy by Jacques' grandfather and after his father's death, the young Fersen inherited a considerable patrimony and a noble title.

It was in this period that Fersen started visiting Capri, thanks to his close French friend, Robert de Tournel, who showed him all the beauties of the island.

After attending military service, Fersen composed his first works of poetry, and had a love affair with a young nobleman. In November 1903 he was arrested, took to trial and convicted of outrage against public morals and corruption of minors.

Just after this experience, he decided to leave his homeland and begin his second life on the blue island of Capri. It was 1904. Here he spent the happiest years of his life, enjoying his passions: opium, known during one of his several trips to the East, and the love of his life, the Roman young boy Nino Cesarini.

Coming back home from Sorrento, one evening Jacques decided to end his life by dissolving five grams of cocaine in a glass of champagne. It was 1923: today he rests at the Non-Chatolic Cemetery of the Island.



OPIUM DEN

"In the East I had known a more powerful god, compared to the other gods: if others give hope, this gives oblivion".
(R. Peyrefitte, The Exile of Capri)

This was the preferred room of the Count, called "my own chambre chinoise, my Chinese room". Fersen decorated it with pipes of the Emperor of China, a large collection that was placed on a varnished rack, next to the patio, surrounded by wickers filled with pillows. At the center he put an altar with a Buddha, on a silver tray there were lamps, golden needles, some pots containing the best quality opium. Here he spent most of his time alone, but often also with friends, initiating them to that pleasure known in the East, to those "imaginary" paradises that now, in Capri, he continued to experience. The upper part of the room is garnished with symbols like the lotus flower, the Star of David, the circle, while in the middle a swastika embellishes the flooring: they are all emblems representing rebirth and a new life, the one that Fersen intended to live on the blue island.



SECOND FLOOR

"I looked for a romantic place, in the hills... overlooking the sea, not too close to the city, something remote and lonely where to build my temple of beauty".
(R. Peyrefitte, The Exile of Capri)

The construction of the Villa begun in 1904: the french designer Chimot was commissioned as designer, the entrepreneur Vito was asked to work on the building, and Mimi Ruggiero was chosen as Chief gardener. Aiming to create something unique in Capri, Fersen preferred the Louis XVI style. The Villa was built on three floors with innovative architectural solutions, sophisticated and expensive materials, vaults and terraces overlooking the sea, exquisite marble, columns and capitals. The gilded salon recalls Klimt and the Vienna Secession, while the details of the stairway's handrail revokes the Art Nouveau. The first name Fersen gave to the Villa was "La Gloriette". Then, realizing that such name was not appropriate to a house that would have been the place consecrated to the love and pain, Fersen chose another one according with the jeunesse d'amour: "Villa Lysis", in memory of the young Athenian Lysis, friend of Socrates, commemorated in the homonymous Plato's dialogue about the philia. The villa was the intellectual circle of a multitude of writers, poets and artists who animate Capri of the early twentieth century.



Photo History

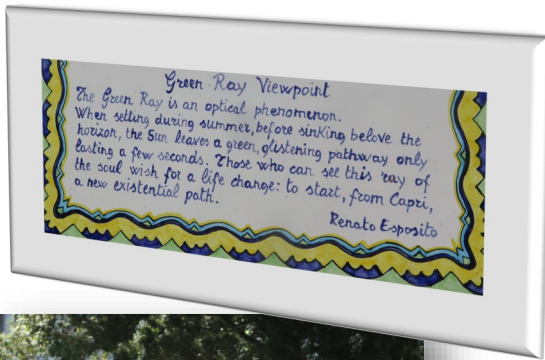
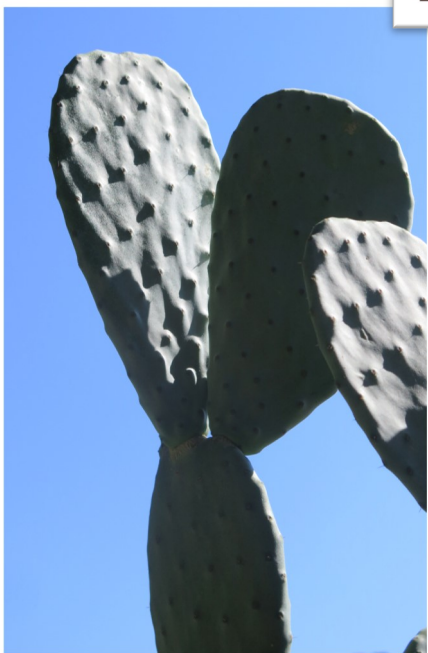






Photo History







Tastes as good as it looks





"You must visit The Blue Grotto" we were told.....what a rip-off



Cash (£14.00) paid to these two guys in the 'cashier boat'



A long queue snaked down the cliff and tour boats arrived and their passengers jumped the queue. You were then squashed into small boats without any safety equipment. then 4 minutes in the grotto and an outstretched hand for the tip



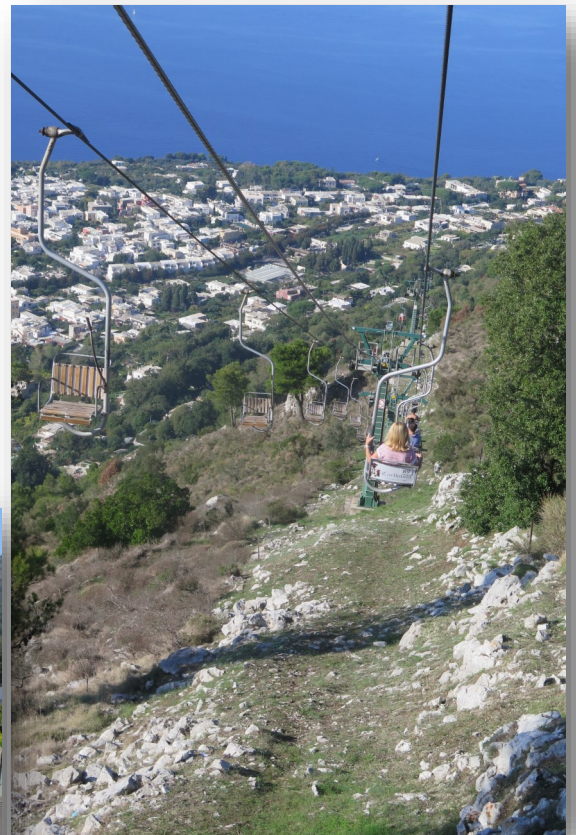
Photo History



A quiet very civilised breakfast overlooking the pool with local cheeses, hams & a great selection



The Monte Solaro chairlift was next to the hotel and we enjoyed the gentle ride to the summit



You had to be quick to sit in the moving seat

Views from the summit at 589m





**La Carne
Meat**
€ 54

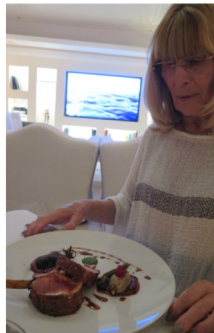
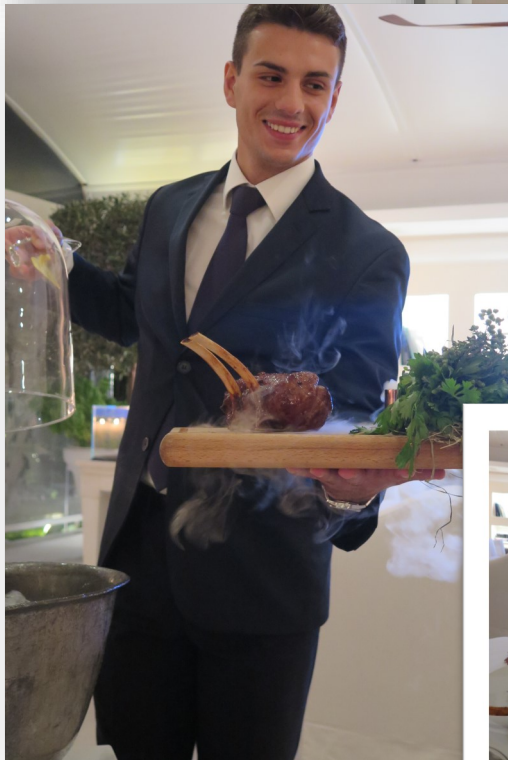
Carpaccio di Bufalo con crema di mozzarella,
maionese al prezzemolo, cipolle di Tropea, lamponi e senape rustica **
*Buffalo carpaccio with mozzarella cheese cream,
parsley mayonnaise, red onions, raspberries and rustic mustard ***

Petto d'anatra affumicato con crema di carote, sedano e ravioli di cipollotti
Smoked duck breast with carrots cream, celery and spring onions "ravioli"

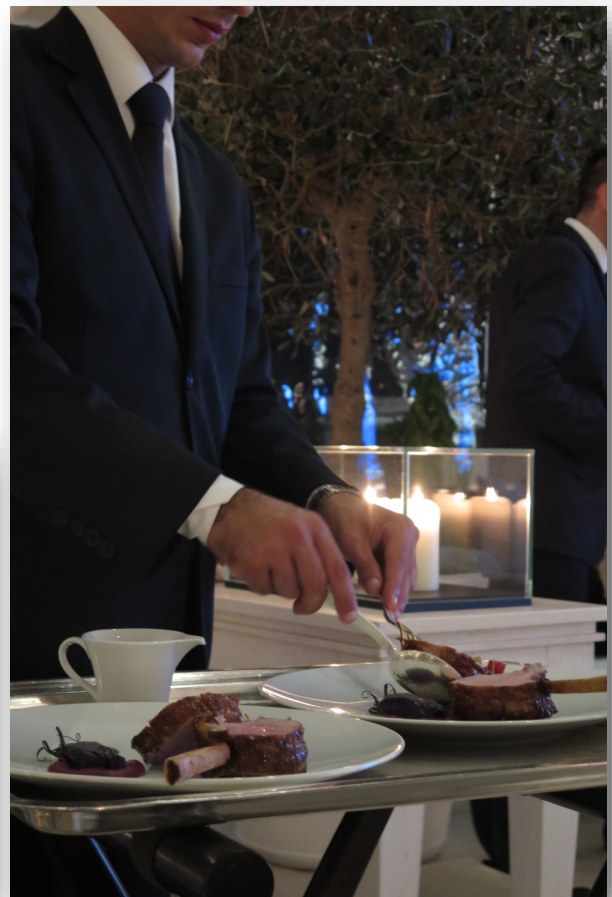
Lombo di agnello con bieta stufata, ceci,
polvere di liquirizia e crema di riso allo zafferano
Lamb loin with stewed chard, chickpeas, liquorice powder and saffron scented rice

Maialino da latte al peperoncino con crema di mais,
spinaci, scalogno e salsa di cacao amaro
hili pepper scented suckling pig with corn sauce, spinach, shallots and bitter chocolate sauce

Carré di vitello cotto a bassa temperatura con variazione di melanzane,
crema di cipolla rossa, capperi ed acciughe
*Low temperature cooked veal loin with eggplants variation,
red onion cream, capers and anchovies*
(minimo 2 persone / minimum two people)



We love the theatre of good cuisine and those Michelin stars were well deserved. Friendly, fun service of beautifully presented wonderful food





Wonderful
desserts





A really excellent cheeseboard and then a 'sweet trolley'. NOT more desserts but a real 'SWEET TROLLEY' plus hot do'nuts . Obviously we could not eat another thing so they gave us this bag of sweets to take home. We ate them back in London !!!

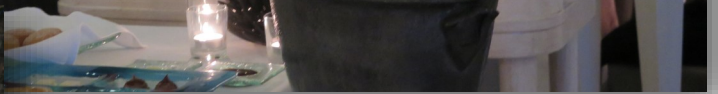




Photo History



Even the 'after-dinner infusions' were superb. Rows of herbs and berries with growing rosemary, basil etc. These were gently pressed and infused with fresh ginger to produce a wonderful drink



"Nothing more please"

Lynn's expression says it all.

The best meal we can remember





Photo History



We walked along the coast path from Piazza Vittoria in Capri centre (where this wonderful statue was on show) down loads of steps where beautiful villas seemed to be built in totally inaccessible cliff-top positions





The endless steps
to the coast



Lynn enjoying her limoncella

We wondered how on earth they get all the building material here and also how difficult it must be every time they leave home...loads of steps or a boat trip!









Piazza S Nicola in Anacapri





Quiet Anacapri at night
with the beautiful square
and attractive tiled seat





At Capris Marina
waiting to depart



The
jetfoil
berthing





The 'in-carriage' cabaret was a non-optional extra

Selling souvenirs with baby strapped to her back



After leaving our luggage at Napoli Central Station we took this old packed graffiti-covered train to Pompeii



The station names were covered with graffiti so it was guesswork finding the station we wanted



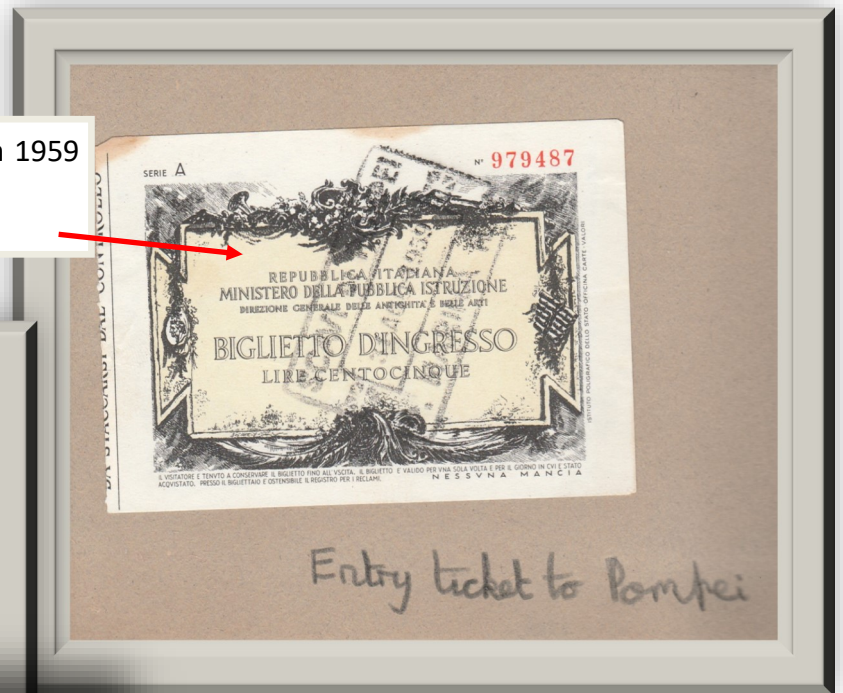
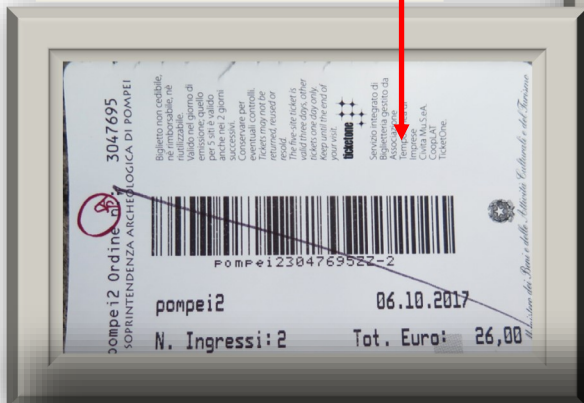


Photo History



This is my entry ticket for Pompeii from 1959 when I was last there with Mum and Dad

...and now 58 years later...



Golden bracelet with
serpents heads

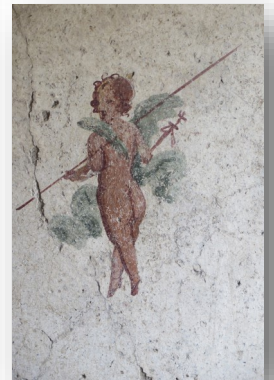


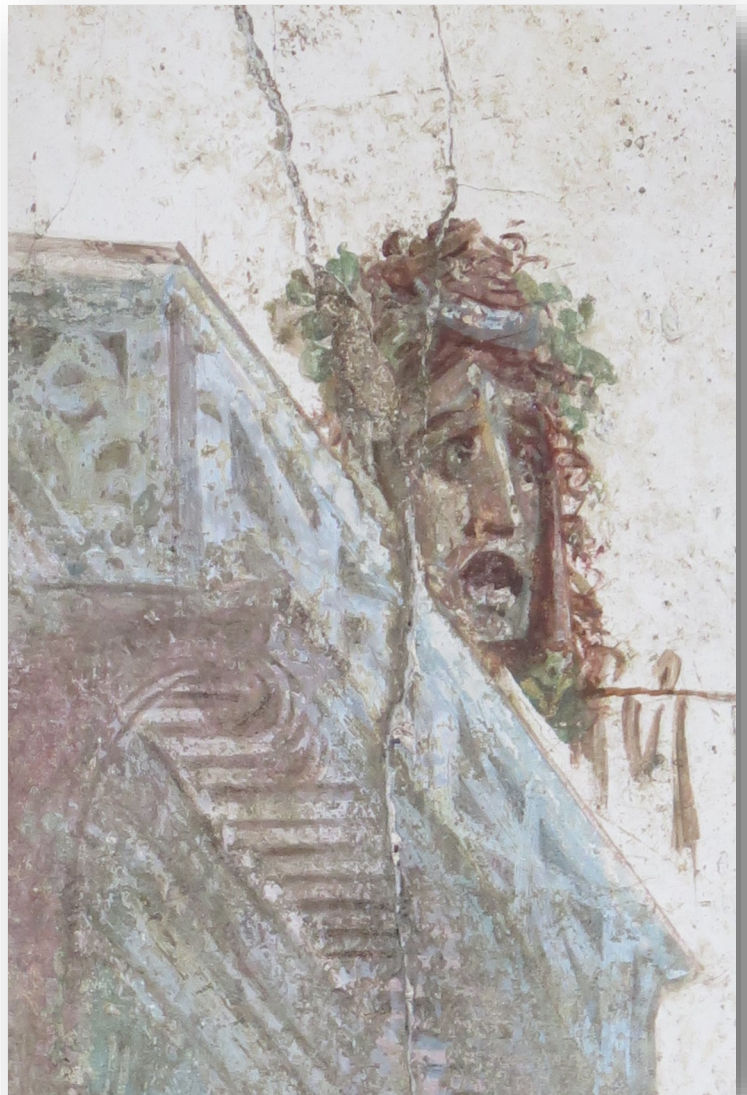
Casts of actual bodies retrieved
from the ash covering



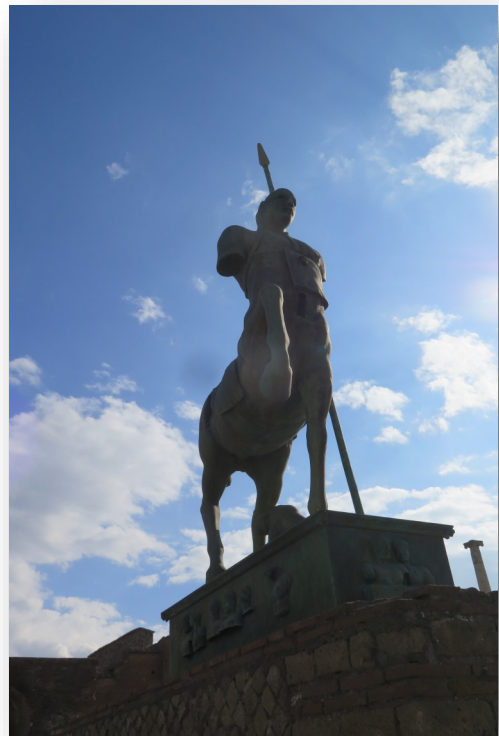


Triclinium wall with painting depicting the abandonment of Ariadne on Naxos and the arrival of Dionysus, bewitched by the young lady.





Palestra dei
Iuvenes





REGIO IX
INSULA XI, 2

Thermopolium di Asellina





The colours of the tiles and mosaics are still discernable







Casa del
Menandro







We found it fascinating that these indentations in the roadways were actually made by chariots





Thought provoking...so no comment







The Basilica



The scale of Pompeii is vast. It was once a thriving and sophisticated Roman city and was buried under meters of ash and pumice after the catastrophic eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D. the city has remained intact until the present day, not only as far as its buildings are concerned, but also as regards the contents inside the houses and shops, providing an absolutely fascinating picture of "daily" life. The walls of the houses are covered with electoral propaganda messages or risqué jokes aimed at particular citizens. The signs on the shop doorways indicate the activity carried out there or the name of the owner. Alongside the elegant villas belonging to the nobility and the luxurious residences of the middle class, stand modest houses where several families lived.....

The peasant dwellings on the other hand are situated around vegetable gardens or small plots of land. On the edge of the city stood the brothels, squalid rooms intended as places of pleasure for sailors and travellers passing through, in the narrow lanes, the workshops and utility rooms provide further evidence of the daily routine performed by workmen and slaves as well as the women of the house. The houses still contain furniture, ornaments, gold and silverware, work tools, kitchenware, bronze and terracotta lamps, foodstuffs of all kinds, counters for serving drinks, grain mills and grindstones, workshops for manufacturing cloth, smithies and outlets selling groceries, fruit and vegetables. There is a remarkable record of Roman painting, of which, without the finds made in Pompeii, virtually nothing would be known.

The architecture and development of the various types of houses is also amply documented. The excavated city provides outstanding historical evidence of Roman civilization and these reminders of the past, are so vivid and tangible and really left us amazed